5/20/72

Dear Charles,

Guess if you were not busy enough before, you are now. Same here.

Stoner did keep his word. I had made a precondition of appearing on TV with him a promise that he'd engage in no racism. He didn't. He did what is crazier and said the FBI had King killed. I believe he actually is certain, too! He is crazy.

He also kept his word and got there early so we could spend some time together before going onto a show in which, essentially if incredibly, we were on the same side. We lunched together Sunday 5/7 (the show was that night and I'm getting a tape of it) and spent some time together at supper. We were in the same hotel, as was Jerry Ray. But Stoner used the paying of expenses by the station for a little bit of his own work, which is understandable. He was not in the hotel much. He was late getting back for supper, so Jerry and I had eaten before he did. I was with him part of the time while he ate, but couldn't be for all of it because I had to gather all the stuff I had to take with me.

I spent four full days with Jerry, who has been Stoner's handyman and has been living with him. I expect he will return to Marietta in about three months. We drove about 500 miles together, ate together each of those days, shared a room one night and had adjoining rooms the other nights.

Stoner and I split after the show. The next morning he went his way and Jerry and I did what I had to do. This is the only time I've met him. I have a better feel of him. I also looked into one case he defended. (He is a prosecutor's dream for defense counsel. He got John Ray convicted when a kid not yet out of law school should have walked him.) Prior to this we had only the briefest correspondence. Its dishonesty was informative. But he is sharp, much sharper than this makes him sound. He is both very lazy and very sick in the head, has been that way all his life. If he'd do any work at all he could be a pretty fair lawyer, crippled in the head as his beliefs make him.

If I have no idea of the size of his St. Louis organization, I do not think it is a small one. He had a rather large band of bodyguards, all young and all but two poorly dressed. He actually had them at the show. He is paranoid. They made a bad impression on everyone. They may have met him at the hotel, which is but a block from the studio, but it is more likely they met him at the station. They were in the studio during the show, and they escorted him back to and into the hotel. Two were so well dressed I did not associate them with him. The others were roughly dressed. I would have imagined his people would be older than this bunch. I imagine the Rays are all members, active or otherwise. I know he knew John Ray. He was in John's bar when a murder was committed there, much earlier. In short, I am suggesting that he St. Louis outfit is more than a couple of people. The rough-looking kids may not be thugs, but they looked it.

Prior to this trip and in connection with some of its purposes, I obtained a fair amount of knowledge of crimes in the St. Louis area and in some cases who committed them. Of this, some I must keep in confidence, but not all. Only what relates to a single man in one case and all that relates to another until after his appeal is heard next month. I had no contact with the St. Louis police and had no time to try and make on. I worked long days and didn't complete all I had planned. I left what I could with an investigative reporter there. And I have no way of knowing what might be new to the police there. If you would like to help them, I'd be willing to take the time. I think the only way we could do it would be for me to read off what was written to me that I must not keep in confidence and tape it. I also have quite a few hours of interviews on tape, but they won't be transcribed for a while. They deal less with crime there in general, more with two specific one where I must preserve confidence. In one case, the tapes do contain other material, not related to crime in St. Louis but to crime near there, in Illinois.

Best regards,